

# LEGACY WORD #1

VISION OF THE WAVES 1956



It was June of **1956**. Loren Cunningham was in the Bahamas with four other young men to evangelize and gather young people together using their musical gifts. On a Wednesday at 3 pm, a few days before his twenty-first birthday, he was kneeling by the bed in the simply-furnished guest room of his missionary host. He was asking the Lord about the message he was to speak that evening. Then, as he looked up at the white walls, something unexpected happened. He says, "Suddenly I was looking at a map of the world, only the map was alive and moving!

Then just as suddenly as it had come the scene was gone." I could see all the continents, and waves were crashing onto their shores. Each wave went onto a continent, then receded, then came up further until it covered the continent completely. The waves become young people – kids my age and even younger – covering all the continents of the globe. They were talking to people on street corners and outside bars. Gospel. They came from everywhere and went everywhere, caring for people.

*Excerpt from **Is That Really You, God?** by Loren Cunningham with Janice Rogers, YWAM Publishing.*

God had spoken to Loren through this vision of the waves. This remarkable initiative by God to share his dream with Loren would lead to the launch of Youth With A Mission four years later. Within a generation millions of young people would have their lives touched by God because of this vision of the waves. We are some of those young people. Our lives have been changed because of how God met Loren that day in the Bahamas. As we reflect back on that event, we realize that that moment had significant parallels to other moments throughout history; moments

when God stepped in to share His heart and His purposes for the world. Indeed we have come to realize that this vision, this unexpected encounter, was a God-initiated, destiny-defining, foundational covenant that God gave Loren in order to birth a new missions movement.

What should that movement look like? What were the major elements of this covenantal vision?

First of all, it was about *youth*. This was both a concrete reality and it can also serve as a metaphor for something more. Concretely, if we ever move away from championing young people we have moved away from the call of God upon us as the YWAM tribe. Metaphorically, this is the language of missional de-regulation and innovation. Young people were not considered candidates for missions in the mid-twentieth century. It was simply not something that was done when Loren saw this vision. And so it is today that this covenantal vision continues to call us to do

what is not being done by others in the church. It calls us to lead out apostolically to birth fresh, entrepreneurial initiatives in the Spirit in order to accomplish Great Commission goals. It calls us to a lifestyle of viral pioneering, co-creating with God, doing and encouraging others to do new things in new ways. Secondly, it was about *all* and *every*. The waves of young people covered every nation in all the continents. It is about being global, comprehensive, inclusive.

If we ever lose sight of the *alls* and the *every*s we have lost sight of God's vision for us as a movement. This is not limited only to the geographic *alls*. It also includes every thematic *all*, as we move redemptively into all the spheres, all the languages, and all other various categories of human life and experience. As we do so, this covenant compels us to grow. It is about recurring and ever-expanding waves. This speaks of multi-generational re-iterations of the vision that expand in fractal-like multiplication.

Each wave builds on that which has gone before. Each one makes a fresh impact in new ways, reaching heights not previously achieved. It's never static. It's always dynamic, focused on going where we are not.